

Camp 3d. Brigade 1st Divi. 9th A.C.
Milldale Miss
July 30. 1863

My dear Jane

I presume this will be the last time you will hear from me at Milldale, and I am not sorry for it. I have never yet been anywhere that there was nothing pleasant to look back at and think about occasionally, except this, and here I look around in vain for any good or pleasant thing to remember Mississippi by. It is but one dark page filled with fatigue suffering and discomfort. We did expect the peaches just ripening would be some compensation for our short rations and salt meat, but they appear never to get ripe. The men pull them regularly as they come near it, and we never wait till they really ripen. However we make the best of it by cooking them, and do very well after all. Since I wrote last we have remained quietly in camp waiting for the Steamboats to come and take us away. But they appear to move very slowly. All the boats that were here were used for taking the 16th Corps up to Helena and Memphis and we have to remain till they return. Two boats made their appearance to day and our sick and wounded are to be put on board at three o'clock tomorrow morning. This will be a good thing for them poor fellows, for they are dying fast on shore. The funeral dirge is the music that is heard all day. Perhaps the cool breeze on the water will revive these men. I have been very busy this week improving our quiet time and getting our back work finished. I have got June completed all but a few little matters that I can easily finish tomorrow, but then there is the whole month of July to begin on. That however must wait till we land somewhere, for the boat shakes too much to permit the making up such papers as we have. Besides I am going to take a good rest. I don't feel as well as I would like to be, and shall feel that every day we stay here is delaying me from being all right again. I am not sick, but my system has given in a little to the fatigue of our journey to and from Jackson more than I expected. I have not lost any in weight, but all the little pimples and bites where I scratched them are turning into boils. The first commenced on my ankle and smarted and spread so that I feared erysipelas, but a dose of calomel checked that. They all look dark and indolent now. I have two boils coming between my hips and two more in my groin and I suppose I will have quite a crop of them before I get through. Except the discomfort of these things there is nothing dangerous about them. It makes me pretty cross, and I have been making the folks about our place stand round pretty sharply for a few days.

You will probably feel it in my letter too dear although I am trying my best to remember it is you that I am writing to. But you know when one is in a bad humor they are not at all particular

who they wreak out on, and the habit makes them disagreeable to every one. It is a good thing that it is Lt. Justice I am with. He stands it all and says nothing. He has a better temper than any man I ever saw, and can control himself under any provocation. There have been numerous changes made here in our regimental and brigade organization, for many different reasons that would be neither instructive nor polite for me to write about. The principal one affecting us is the change of our brigade again. The 8th Mich & 79th N.Y. have been taken from us and the 17th Mich placed among us. This 17th Mich is the regiment that made their first appearance at South Mountain and charged alongside the 100th when Hugh was shot. We are pleased with the change, though it leaves us only four regiments now, and very few in numbers, scarcely more than would make one full regiment. As our old brigade Quartermaster belonged to the 79th N.Y. we lost him, as he had to go to his regiment into the new brigade. That left us without any, and Col. Leasure has appointed Johnny to that place, the same that Lt. Justice had when I went to him. Lt. Justice persuaded the Col to appoint him. He also expected that I would leave him and go with Johnny, but as I know he did not want to go I would not leave him. I would like to be with Johnny well enough, but I will not leave Justice till he discharges me. Willie will remain also, and in another view it is better, as it will not look like a family affair then. Besides we are always very near each other, now occupying tents alongside, and we can help him at any time he needs a little extra work done, and Lt. Justice will see him through any difficulties in running the teams and regulating the drivers and mules, while for the office work he knows as much about that as any one. He is again by this removed from his position in the line and becomes a member of the Col. staff. He will be entitled to wear his shoulder straps on black velvet, and have stripes of gold cord on his pants! This is regarded as a position free from danger, and probably it is more so than others, but you remember me telling you of Q.M. Rice's Sergeant losing his leg and the Q. M. of 35th Mass. being instantly killed the night of the storm, while out before Jackson. Q. M. Baker was shot in the ear. There is a saying in the army that a Quartermaster never gets killed, but it's not quite true. We are in a great commotion about where we are going. All kind of rumors and guesses abound. The popular one tonight is that Burnside has been appointed to the command at Fortress Monroe and that we will have to go there. However I have learned that we move on orders directing us to proceed by boat to Cairo, and report our arrival there. Then we will learn our future destination. It may be since Morgan has had his band used up in Ohio, that Kentucky is considered safe, and they may use us somewhere else. It is not likely you will hear from us again till

we arrive at Cairo or some other point northward, and when sufficiently near home Lt. Justice will leave us and take his fifteen days rest. Before then I will have a talk with him about your coming on with him, provided we are to stop in Kentucky, and you can think of the matter in the meantime. If we do not stop in Kentucky it will of course be out of the question. As Johnny is Q. M. he will have control of tents enough to make it more comfortable than otherwise, and he has already given us one for our sleeping accommodations besides our office.

We have nothing new here. All is quiet. We wished a long time for rain, and at last it came, and with a vengeance too, making up for the delay by the great quantity. It blew down tents and trees, and overflowed the camps in the hollows. We had four visitors in our tent when the storm commenced, and by all of us holding on our best we saved ours. Q. M. Martin's next door blew up and his office table floated down the road. One good thing we get a daily mail once more. Your 25th of July was the last I received from you. Since then I got one from Hugh, Sallie and George, and some papers to day from Phila. I think by George's you have been telling how dilatory he was in writing. Well so he is and I have not had a word from Katie since I sent her some blossoms from Kentucky. At Pitts. they are nearly as bad. If you did the same way I would have very few letters to write. If it was not so late I would write you some more, but I must retire and fight mosquitoes till morning. We have a great many toads hopping over us during the night, but as they eat the insects we encourage them. I have two tame ones under the corner of my desk. They stay in the tent all night. And one little mouse too.

Yours with much love,
William